



USE OF FORCE POLICIES

Fairfax County Police Department

Ethics and integrity have guided the Fairfax County Police Department for more than 80 years. These foundational principles, combined with our model of co-producing policies and practices with our engaged community, have earned us the reputation as one of the safest major jurisdictions in the United States.

POLICY - DE-ESCALATION

Policy: [General Order 540.2](#), Use of Force – De-Escalation: *When possible, officers should seek to utilize de-escalation strategies to prevent situations from deteriorating to the point where they would need to use force. Officers should attempt to gain voluntary compliance and reduce the level of force required in a situation through verbal communication efforts. When force is applied, officers will adjust the amount of force used to overcome an individual's resistance and to gain control.*

POLICY - DUTY TO INTERVENE

Policy: [General Order 540.3](#), Use of Force – Duty to Intervene: *Any officer present and observing another officer using force that is clearly beyond that which is objectively reasonable under the circumstances shall, when in a position to do so, safely intercede to end and prevent the further use of such excessive force. Additionally, officers have the duty to intervene in all other situations where an officer is acting in violation of laws, orders, policies, or ethical conduct and immediately notify an on-duty supervisor or commander.*

POLICY - USE OF FORCE CONTINUUM

Policy: [General Order 540.4](#), Use of Force – Resistance and Levels of Control: *When force is necessary, officers will assess each incident, based on policy, training and experience, to determine which force options are appropriate for the situation to safely bring a person under control in a safe manner. Officers must only use the amount of control that is objectively reasonable to overcome resistance in order to take lawful action.*

POLICY – CHOKEHOLDS (NOT SANCTIONED)

Policy: [General Order 540.13](#), Use of Force – Empty Hand Tactics: *Carotid artery restraints and chokeholds are not sanctioned force options by the Fairfax County Police Department.* [General Order 540.15](#), Use of Force – Baton: *Utilizing the baton in a manner constituting a carotid artery restraint or chokehold is not sanctioned by the Fairfax County Police Department.*

POLICY- WARNING BEFORE SHOOTING

Policy: [General Order 540.20](#), Use of Force – Firearms: *If feasible, when using a firearm for the purpose of deadly force or attaining a ready gun position, officers should give the verbal warning, "Police, don't move!" When possible and depending upon the person's level of resistance, officers should provide simple, specific, and clear directions to the person.*

POLICY - SHOOTING AT MOVING VEHICLES

Policy: [General Order 540.20](#), Use of Force – Firearms: *Officers shall not discharge their firearm at or from a moving vehicle unless there is a threat of death or serious injury against the officer or another person. - Officers have an affirmative obligation, based on the totality of circumstances, to move out of the path of an oncoming vehicle when possible*

POLICY - REGARDING APPLICATION OF DEADLY FORCE

Policy: [General Order 540.20](#), Use of Force – Firearms: *Force shall not be used unless it is reasonably necessary in view of the circumstances confronting the officer. The application of deadly force should only be used in the most extreme circumstances where all lesser means of force have failed or could not reasonably be utilized.*

POLICY - COMPREHENSIVE REPORTING

Policy: [General Order 540.21](#), Use of Force – Documenting Actions: *An officer who uses any force or reportable action shall document the circumstances in an incident report or supplement in the current Record Management System. The responsibility for documenting a force incident or reportable action primarily rests with the officer who deployed that force or reportable action. The on-duty supervisor shall ensure that any force incident or reportable action is properly documented by an officer on an incident report or supplement in the current RMS. Where a supervisor believes that a force incident or reportable action was excessive or not within policy, the supervisor shall promptly notify their commander of their findings. Copies of all incident reports involving force or reportable actions shall be sent to IAB and appropriate commanders.*